The good Fight of Faith, in the Cauſe of GOD againſt the Kingdom of SATAN,

Exemplified, in a

SERMON

Preach'd at the Pariſh-Church of

St. *Clements Danes, Weſtminſter,*

On the 24th of March, $170\frac{8}{9}$.

AT THE

FUNERAL

OF

Mr. John Dent,

Who was barbarouſly murder'd in the doing his Duty, in the Execution of the Laws againſt Profaneneſs & Immorality.

By *THOMAS BRAY*, D. D.
Miniſter of St. *Botolph, Aldgate.*

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of the Juſtices of Peace, of the Societies for Reformation of Manners, and other Gentlemen that heard it.

LONDON,
Printed and Sold by *Joſeph Downing* in *Bartholomew-Cloſe* near *Weſt-Smithfield*, 1709.

To the Justices of the Peace, and other Gentlemen, at whose Request the following Sermon was made Publick.

Gentlemen,

I *Wish I might have been excus'd the Publishing a Discourse composed with so much haste, and amidst so much hurry, as must needs render it too crude and undigested to appear in Print; but the Consideration which gave force to your Commands, is the Occasion which may be here taken to publish to the World, that great Countenance which so many Persons of Distinction have given to the* CAUSE OF GOD IN THE REFORMATION OF MANNERS, *by attending the Funeral of a* Martyr *in this blessed Cause.*

It was a glorious Sight, and will be of singular Use undoubtedly, as well to animate those excellent Persons, who have devoted themselves to this, the best Service to God and their Country; as to discourage the impious and immoral Wretches of both Sexes; to have seen upwards of 30 *Constables and Beadles; As also between* 20 *and* 30 *of the venerable Clergy to precede the Corps;* 12 *Justices of the Peace holding up the Pall, and immediately following it; and a great Train of other Gentlemen of Quality. Among them, some Aldermen, and lastly above* 1000 *worthy Citizens and others conducting this blessed Saint to his Grave. It was a sight, at which the Powers of Darkness, I am perswaded, did Tremble; and I believe is no small Terror to those* Evil-Doers, *who are in Nature also themselves Devils, as much as they can be in humane Shape; for hereby they may conclude, that as much as Impiety and Immorality have advanc'd of late Years; yet God has those, who will also advance on to meet them whatever they suffer by it.*

And as so noble an Appearance was a comfortable Sight, as it respects the Cause, so likewise as it regards the Person who suffered thus gloriously in it. It was not his Birth and Quality, nor his Estate and Posts in Publick, whilst he lived, (for you knew him to have been but a mean Man) that could induce you to give him such uncommon Respects at his Death. But several Gentlemen in the Commission, which you do so much adorn, found in him, throughout his many Years Service in the Great business of Reformation of Manners, *i. e. in bringing before you the lewd and disorderly Criminals, a most extraordinary Zeal, with a perfect Integrity, and a single Aim at the Glory of God and the Good of his Fellow-Creatures. And this made you so greatly value and respect him, whilst he lived; and to honour him, as you have done, when dead. And upon the whole, when the Magistracy of this Nation, shall come universally to appear thus publickly, as, for ever blessed be the Almighty, you more and more do, in the Cause of God and Good Men (And when they shall have read Mr.* Disney's *most incomparable* Essay upon the Execution of the Laws, *as I hope all will) in the midst of our Melancholy on the Occasion of so publick a Degeneracy both in Principles and Practice; it gives a comfortable Prospect of an happy Recovery of the Church of God to its primitive State of Piety and Virtue, and that the Kingdom of Satan will not stand long; nor Satanical Men vilifie, insult and murder the Servants of Christ without End.*

And that the Almighty may increase the Number of such Ministers of God for Good, *as you shew your selves to be, is the hearty Prayer of,*

Gentlemen,

Your most Affectionate and

Obedient humble Servant,

THOMAS BRAY.

1 Tim. VI. Ver. xii.

Fight the good Fight of Faith, lay hold on Eternal Life, whereunto thou art also Called, and hast profess'd a Good Profession before many Witnesses.

I Little thought, that a late Discourse I made before many of you, should be a Prologue to so fatal a Tragedy as we have here presented to us. As I then told you that there are two Powers in the World contending for Dominion over Mankind; God, and our Lord Jesus Christ our Rightful Lord and Sovereign, and the Devil that Arch-Rebel, and Usurper; And that in this War the whole World is Engag'd, and none can stand Neuter; So now our sad Experience shews us this Truth, that we who profess our selves the Servants of Jesus Christ, must *Fight the Good Fight of Faith, as we will lay hold on Eternal Life, that thereunto we are called, and have Professed* in our Baptismal Covenant *a good Profession before many Witnesses*.

But to illustrate this matter the better to you, I shall proceed as follows.

First, I will remind you of your Christian Profession, Covenant and Engagements; shewing you that as the State of one in Covenant with God, is a State of Warfare; so our *Baptismal Covenant*, is a *Military Oath* taken by us, to be faithful Soldiers under the great Captain of our Salvation Jesus Christ, in his and our War against Satan, and the Powers and Works of Darkness.

Secondly, That it being of absolute Necessity that we continue Faithful in our Covenant unto our Lives End; And yet there being an Enmity, as between the Serpent himself, and the Seed of the Woman, so between the Seed of both, *viz.* The Wicked and the Righteous, the latter are almost sure to undergo Persecutions from the former; and that therefore it is a Duty incumbent upon the Sons, and Servants of God in Covenant with him, constantly to resist the Temptations of the Serpent, and his Seed, to confess Christ, and his Truths, and to stand firm in his Cause even unto Martyrdom.

Thirdly, I will shew you what Spiritual Weapons and Armour you must use in this sharp Conflict and Engagement; and how by using them you shall become Victorious. The Armour whereby we shall certainly become Victorious, if we put it on, and make use of it, is Faith: *Fight the good Fight of Faith*. And,

Fourthly, I will move you by all Means to Fight, to stand your Ground, and daily more and more to gain upon your Spiritual Adversaries, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh; and in a Word, to beat down Satan's Kingdom, in this your Christian Warfare. I will move you to this from the following Considerations.

1st, Because this is a *good Fight*, well worthy our Engage-

ment in it, and the fitteſt in the World to exerciſe our Courage and our Skill. *Fight the good Fight of Faith.*

2*dly*, Becauſe if we become Victorious in this Fight, we ſhall *lay hold on Eternal Life*; we ſhall be crowned with greater Honours than in our Earthly Conqueſts, even with eternal Life; *Lay hold on eternal Life.*

3*dly*, I will excite you to be vigorous, reſolute, and ſteady in your Chriſtian Warfare, becauſe we are *thereunto called*; The Nature of our Profeſſion, engages us to be ſo: *Whereunto we are alſo called.*

4*thly*, Becauſe we have ſo Publickly and Solemnly engaged to fight under Chriſt's Banner; and it will be our utmoſt Diſgrace and Cowardice, to fly from it our ſelves, and to give way in the Battle; eſpecially having made ſuch Publick and Solemn Engagements to the contrary; *We have profeſs'd a good Profeſſion*, &c.

And then, *laſtly*, becauſe the Example of ſtout Leaders are of mighty Conſequence to encourage thoſe that follow them, to do their Parts alſo bravely, I will repreſent to you with what Courage, Reſolution, and undaunted Magnanimity, the Martyrs that have gone before you have fought in this Chriſtian Warfare; and particularly our good Brother here before us.

Firſt, *I will remind you of your Chriſtian Profeſſion, Covenant, and Engagements; Shewing you, that as the State of one in Covenant with God, is a State of Warfare; ſo our Baptiſmal Covenant is a military Oath taken by us to be faithful Soldiers under the great Captain of our Salvation Jeſus Chriſt in this, which is both his and our War againſt Satan, and the Powers, and Works of Darkneſs.*

I have been long of this Perſwaſion, and for any thing I can ſee, muſt ever continue of the ſame Opinion, that there is nothing within the whole Compaſs of our Religion of greater Conſequence to be well underſtood and throughly apprehended by us, than the whole Doctrine of the *Covenant of Grace*, viz. *the Occaſion thereof by Reaſon of the Fall, the Nature, Terms, and Conditions of the ſame; By whoſe Mediation it was obtained for us, by what Aſſiſtance we ſhall be enabled to perform it, and our Obligations thereunto.* And that, as for many other reaſons, not here to be mentioned, and for which I muſt therefore refer you, (*a*) as well as for the Knowledge of the thing it ſelf, to what I have ſaid elſewhere; ſo particularly for this; That as the State of a Chriſtian, as ſuch, is a State of Warfare; ſo our Baptiſmal Covenant is a military Oath taken by us to be faithful Soldiers under the great Captain of our Salvation Jeſus Chriſt, in this which is both his and our War againſt Satan, and the Powers and Works of Darkneſs.

That the State of a Chriſtian is a State of Warfare, wherein the Sinner is on the ſide of Satan, and the true Chriſtian in the Cauſe of God, I did at large ſhew you on thoſe Words of St. *John*, 1 *Epiſt.* 3. *the* 8*th Ver. He that committeth Sin is of the Devil: For the Devil ſinneth from the Beginning*: And the whole Diſcourſe being on that Subject, I ſhall not repeat that matter here, but rather refer you to the *Diſcourſe* it ſelf for Satisfaction

(a) *Lectures on the Prelimin. Queſt. and Anſw. of the Ch. Cat. or the ſhort Diſcourſe on the Bapt. Cov.*

But

But that our *Baptiſmal Covenant* is a *Military Oath*, taken by us to be faithful Soldiers under the great Captain of our Salvation Jeſus Chriſt, in this our War againſt Satan, and the Powers and Works of Darkneſs; As this is a Point not yet ſpoken to, ſo it may well deſerve our Conſideration. That the *Roman* Soldiers were conſtantly wont to take a *Military Oath* to their General, is what every one who is any thing ſeen in their Antiquities, does very well know; as alſo that ſuch their Oath was called a *Sacrament*, whence the Phraſe *Sacramento ſe obſtringere*, to bind ones ſelf under the Oath or Sacrament, when they took ſuch an Oath to be faithful to their General. And in alluſion to this it is, that both the Ordinances of Baptiſm and the Lord's-Supper are alſo called Sacraments; becauſe in the one we did firſt enter, in the other we ratifie ſuch our Covenant with God, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; in the moſt ſolemn manner obliging our ſelves therein utterly to *Renounce the Devil*, and adhere to Chriſt our Rightful Lord and Maſter to our Lives End.

And here I cannot but admire the Wiſdom of our Church above any, whether Reform'd or others, that ſo agreeably to the whole Tenor of Scripture, and to the Practice of the ancient Church, under this Form of a *military Oath*, ſhe enters, and binds down all her Children to an utter Abjuration of Satan, and a faithful Service and ſtrict Allegiance to Chriſt. Take the Scripture from one end to the other, and it conſiſts of a Hiſtory of a long and fierce War between Chriſt and his Church on one ſide, and Satan and his Adherents on the other; together with the Laws of Chriſt's Subjects; in conforming to which they muſt expreſs their Allegiance to him; and the conſtant Phraſe of the Ancient Church in the Entring of any of its Children by Baptiſm into Covenant with Chriſt, was altogether *Military*, as may be ſeen in *Tertullian*, the *Conſtitutions* called *Apoſtolical*, St *Cyprian*, *Ambroſe*, *Cyril* of *Jeruſalem*, and in whom not. So that from the Beginning it has been always thought, and it continues ſtill to be eſteemed, that as the State of a Chriſtian is a mere Warfare under Chriſt his General, againſt Satan that great Rebel; So our *Baptiſmal Covenant* is the *Oath of Allegiance* we have taken to Chriſt our Saviour; the *Military Oath* whereby we have bound our ſelves to ſerve faithfully under him. And thus much may ſuffice for the firſt. Proceed we on next to our next Head of Diſcourſe; Namely to ſhew;

Secondly, *That it being of abſolute Neceſſity, that we continue Faithful in our Covenant unto our Lives End. And yet there being an Enmity, as between the Serpent himſelf and the Seed of the Woman; So between the Seed of both,* viz. *The Wicked and the Righteous; the latter are almoſt ſure to undergo Perſecution from the Former. And that therefore it is a Duty incumbent upon the Sons and Servants of God in Covenant with him, conſtantly to reſiſt the Temptations of the Serpent and his Seed; to confeſs Chriſt and his Truths; and to ſtand firm in his Cauſe even unto Martyrdom.*

Having

Having taken this Military Oath to Chriſt; it is of abſolute Neceſſity, that we continue Faithful in our Covenant with him to our Lives End. This if we do not, we ſhall come under the Guilt of being *Covenant-Breakers*, and ſuch you will find among fearful Company, *Rom.* 1. 31. We ſhall be alſo guilty of the higheſt *Perjury*. And know, that as *the Law is made for the Lawleſs and Diſobedient, for the Ungodly, and for Sinners, for Unholy and profane, for Murderers of Fathers, and Murderers of Mothers, for Man-ſlayers, for Whoremongers, for them who defile themſelves, for Men-ſtealers, for Liars*; So for *perjured Perſons*, 1 Tim. 1. 9, 10. And as the Law is made *ſtrict* againſt them, ſo it will be one Day executed *ſeverely* upon them. But then you are to conſider withal,

That there being an Enmity, as between the Serpent himſelf, and the Seed of the Woman; ſo between the Seed of both, *viz.* The Wicked and the Righteous, the Latter are almoſt ſure to undergo Perſecution from the Former. The Serpent is the Devil, and the Seed of the Woman is the *Meſſiah* our Lord Chriſt; And as, ſoon after the Revolt of Mankind from God to Satan, a perpetual and bloody War was proclaim'd between the Devil and his Vaſſals, and Chriſt with his Subjects, in thoſe remarkable Words, *Gen.* 3. 15. *I will put Enmity between Thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed; it ſhall bruiſe thy Head, and thou ſhall bruiſe his Heel*; And in the ſame Words, it was foretold that Chriſt and his Followers ſhould ſuffer ſeverely from Satan and his Aſſociates; ſo the Malice of the Satanical Crew did ſoon appear, and continues even to this Day. The peculiar Character of Satan is, that *he is a Murderer*; and thoſe who are of a like murderous Diſpoſition with him, are ſaid to be his *Children*, John. 5. 44. *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Luſt of your Father ye will do: He was a Murderer from the Beginning*. And this Diſpoſition both of him and them, was very early exemplified in his Firſt-born *Cain, who was of that wicked one; and ſlew his Brother* Abel. *And wherefore ſlew he him? becauſe his own Works were evil, and his Brother's Good.* Ah! here is the true Cauſe generally of whatever Murders, and always of the Perſecutions and Maſſacrees which have been in the World. Impious and wicked Men, horrible and outragious Swearers, Profaners of his ſacred Name and Word, Breakers of his Sabbaths, and Contemners of his Ordinances, as alſo thoſe Sons of *Belial*, Adulterers, Whoremongers and Drunkards. Theſe, as well as Idolaters, are his profeſs'd Votaries, and are uſually his more immediate Servants, who conſtantly attend his Chappel, the *Play-Houſe*. And now the faithful Subjects, and true Servants of God, as they are the very Reverſe of all this in themſelves; ſo they with an heroick Zeal, for the Honour of their Lord and Maſter, labour all they can to bring off thoſe wretched Men from their vile Servitude to Sin and Satan; and for this both Satan and Satanical Men rage horribly againſt them, revile and malign, and gnaſh their Teeth upon them, and if they can, will

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murder and deſtroy them. Thus ſtands the Truth of the Caſe, and then *marvel not, my brethren, if the World hate you*, 1 John 3. 13. nor be ye diſcouraged at it; for what ſays the great Captain of your Salvation, your Leader, *John* 15. 18, 19, 20, 21. *If the World hate you, ye know it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the World, the World would love its own; but becauſe you are not of the World, but I have choſen you out of the World; Therefore the World hateth you. Remember the Word that I ſaid unto you, the Servant is not greater than the Lord, if they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you; if they have kept my ſaying, they will keep yours alſo. But all theſe things will they do unto you, for my Name's Sake, becauſe they know not him that ſent me.* Thus you ſee in what noble Strains your great General does rouſe up your Courage, and be not diſheartned.

But let every Son and Servant of God, who is in Covenant with him, and ſo has taken the *Military Oath* to be faithful to, and to ſtick by him, look upon it as a Duty incumbent upon him, conſtantly to reſiſt and repel the Temptations of the Serpent and his Seed, to confeſs Chriſt and his Truths; Nay, and to ſtand firm in his Cauſe, even to Martyrdom it ſelf, if there ſhould be occaſion. You have entered into Covenant with Him, to renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the ſinful Luſts of the Fleſh; to believe all the Articles of your Chriſtian Faith; and to obey God's holy Will and Commandments, and to walk in the ſame all the Days of your Life. And you muſt make it your firſt Care, in your own Perſons, to reſiſt and repel whatever Temptations he himſelf, or his under-Tempters, the World and the Fleſh, ſhall ply you withal, to induce you to falſifie your Vows to God. And both his and their Temptations being very many, various and wilely, as I have already largely ſhew'd the World, (*b*) you muſt be very watchful, and very Reſolute, leſt you be enſnar'd and overcome by them. But when through the Aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit, which will not upon your earneſt Prayer for it, be wanting to your Support, you ſhall find your Virtue pretty well eſtabliſhed, proceed in the Name of God;

To Confeſs openly and bravely your Adherence to Chriſt in the Vindication of his Cauſe, of his Truths, and of his Laws. And accordingly if any Impudent Blaſphemer, ſhall viliſie and ridicule the Scriptures, or arrogantly Diſpute againſt any the Fundamental Articles of your Faith; or ſhall deride Piety and Virtue, and be found in the breach of any the Captital Parts thereof, by profane Curſing and Swearing, by the Profanation of the Lord's-day, by Rioting or Drunkenneſs, by Chambering and Wantonneſs, if they appear Incorrigible, and beyond the force of Perſwaſion to reclaim, give them not only to *underſtand*, but to *feel*, that we live under a Chriſtian Government, and that as yet, Thanks to our Law-makers who are gone before us, there are Laws to reſtrain their Madneſs.

And thus you muſt by Virtue of your *Military Oath*, or Cove-

(*b*) *See Cat. Lect.* 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

nant,

nant, ſtand firm in God's Cauſe, even to *Martyrdom* it ſelf, if there ſhould be Occaſion. It is a vulgar error crept into Mens heads, that in thoſe Nations where Chriſtianity is entertain'd, or at leaſt profeſs'd in the purity thereof, there is no place for Martyrdom. Such ſuppoſe *Martyrdom* is a ſuffering to Death in the Profeſſion or Vindication, of the *Doctrinal part* of Chriſtianity only, of all or of ſome Article of their Creed; But that as to the *practical Part*, to ſuffer with reference to that, does not deſerve the noble and glorious Title of a Martyr. But the Truth is otherwiſe. And Martyrdom properly ſignifies a ſuffering even to Death, in the Teſtimony and Acknowledgment of Gods Sovereign Authority over us, be it with reſpect to any Truth he requires us to believe, or of any Duty he obliges us to diſcharge. And in this latter acceptation *John the Baptiſt* was a Martyr, when he was Beheaded for having frankly reprov'd *Herod* for marrying his Brother *Philip*'s Wife; And I will be bold to affirm, our good Brother here before us, as he was murdered in the *beſt Service* in the World, the promoting a *Reformation of Manners*, may alſo deſerve the moſt noble of all Titles, that of *Martyr*. In both the Authority of God is equally aſſerted, in both therefore in the Crown of Martyrdom is equally attain'd. And in either caſe, ſhould any of us be providentially call'd forth to give our Teſtimony to God's Authority; either by confeſſing him and his Divine Truths, or by yielding Obedience to his Commands, we muſt do it at the hazard of our Lives, and the Expence of our Blood; *Not fearing them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul: but rather fearing him which is able to deſtroy both Body and Soul in Hell*, Mat. 10. 28. And that this we might be able to do, ſhould it be the Divine Will and Pleaſure to call us forth, at the Expence; even of our Blood to aſſert his Cauſe, I ſhall proceed,

Thirdly, *To ſhew you what Spiritual Weapons and Armour you muſt uſe in this ſharp Conflict and Engagement. And how by uſing them, you ſhall become Victorious.* The Armour whereby we ſhall certainly become *Victorious*, if we put it on, and make uſe of it, is Faith. *Fight the good Fight of Faith.* This is the Direction of St. *Paul* in the very caſe we are upon, our Spiritual Warfare, or the Fighting God's Cauſe againſt all the Powers of Darkneſs, *We wreſtle not againſt Fleſh and blood*, not only againſt Human force and violence, and corrupt Nature, *but againſt Principalities, againſt Powers, againſt the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, againſt Spiritual Wickedneſs in High Places. Wherefore take unto you the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to withſtand in the Evil Day, and having done all, to ſtand. Stand therefore, having your Loyns girt about with Truth, and having on the breaſtplate of Righteouſneſs; and your feet ſhod with the Preparation of the Goſpel of Peace; Above all, taking the ſhield of Faith, wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: Praying always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all Perſeverance, and Supplication for all Saints*, Eph. 6. 12, 13, 14,

15, 16, 17, 18. Here we are directed indeed to the whole Armour of God, whereby we may be able to ſtand againſt the Wiles of the Devil; and a noble Place of Scripture it is, worthy a Comment upon every Part of it, would Time permit. But that which the Apoſtle himſelf more particularly recommends to our Uſe, is Faith; *Above all, take the Shield of Faith*, and the Force of that is what alone I can now ſpeak to. And as *without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, by diſcharging as we ought, our Covenant Engagements to him; ſo in Virtue of it there are no Difficulties in our Chriſtian Warfare, be they never ſo great, but we may overcome; as appears by what others have done before us in the Strength of it; a noble Record of whoſe Glorious Atchievements, with a moſt pathetick Exhortation to follow their Steps, we have in the 11 *and* 12 *Chapters* to the *Hebrews*; a Place of Scripture which will yeild an exceeding great Support to thoſe who are call'd forth to the more rough and dangerous Services of Religion, and ſuch as may probably bring them at laſt to Martyrdom, in the Cauſe of God againſt Satan; and which therefore I would particularly recommend to the ſerious Meditation of many here.

But of what Nature, you will ſay, is that Faith, by the Virtue of which we can do ſuch mighty Things; and how ſhall we uſe it, ſo as to become *Victorious* by it? And to ſum up, in as few Words as poſſible, what may be to our preſent Purpoſe; in ſhort it is this, a well-grounded firm Perſwaſion, that it is God who gave us our Being, and all that we are, and all that we have, ſo that we are entirely his Property, and ought to live and die ſolely to his Glory. That he continually exerciſes a watchful Providence over us, ſuch as a wiſe Prince does over his People; So that we are to look upon our ſelves as his Subjects, to yeild our ſelves obedient to his Laws, and to reckon upon both our Perſons and Services as abſolutely at his Appointment: That when at the Inſtigation of Satan, Mankind had revolted over from God to him; the divine Goodneſs, in meer Compaſſion to our deplorable Condition, as Rebels to the beſt of Maſters, and Slaves to the cruelleſt of Tyrants, did ſend his own Son into the World to bring us back to him our God, and to redeem and reſcue us from under the Power of the Devil; So that we ought moſt devoutly to look up to him as our great Deliverer and Redeemer. That in order to compaſs a compleat Redemption for us, by mediating an entire Reconciliation between God and us; tho' himſelf in Nature God, he took upon him that of Man, and being God-Man, a middle Perſon between God and us, he put on a Treaty of Accommodation between us, for which ſurely we can never ſufficiently bleſs him: That under this Character of *Mediator*, he firſt took upon him the Quality of a *Prophet*, to inlighten our benighted Minds in our Way home to God, and to preſcribe us the Terms and Conditions of that Covenant, on whoſe Conditions alone he would receive us to Mercy. And ſurely this we ought to cloſe with; And that He moreover, becauſe the divine Juſtice muſt be fully ſatisfi'd for ſo high an Affront done to God by our Revolt, took upon him the Office of a *Prieſt*, to

that Degree, as never was done before or ſince; even ſo as to lay down his Life, and offer his own moſt precious Blood a Sacrifice for us, to attone and appeaſe the Wrath of his Father conceiv'd againſt us; ſo that we are his purchaſed Poſſeſſion with a Witneſs. And after his Sufferings on Earth, having aſcended into Heaven, and there being veſted with all the Power and Authority of a *King* over his Church, were committed altogether to his Government, and we are under his Conduct; and muſt therefore look upon our ſelves as altogether his Subjects, Servants, and Soldiers; to fight his Battles againſt his and our Enemy the Devil: In diſcharging our Parts well in which Warfare, as becomes us in the ſeveral Poſts and Stations in which he ſhall allot us, we may aſſure our ſelves of being infinitely and unſpeakably Rewarded by him, for ſo he has promis'd us; But if we ſhall prove recreant and Renegadoes, and Revolt again over to the Devil, he will moſt direfully puniſh us; for ſo he has plainly Threaten'd. And this may be ſufficient at preſent to be ſpoke to, as to the *matter* of that Faith whereby we may come off Victorious and Conquerors in the Day of Battle.

But if you do demand farther, How are we to uſe this noble Weapon of Faith, and when moſt ſeaſonably? Why, you are always with great Seriouſneſs, and great Intenſeneſs and Application of Thought, to *meditate* upon theſe awful Points now mentioned. But eſpecially whenever you find your ſelf likely to be engag'd in the Reſiſtance of any ſtrong Temptation to violate any one Article of your Covenant with God, or in any Difficult and dangerous Service, whereby we are call'd forth to do him eminent Honour: Then eſpecially be ſure you have your Eye fixt upon thoſe great Things, *Praying withal all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit*; For ſo St. *Paul* adviſes us, that we ſhould do in Concurrence with Faith, *Eph.* 6. 18. And being thus prepar'd and arm'd with Faith and Prayer, you may ſafely throw your ſelves into the Heat of the Battle; and no doubt you will come off Conqueuors. And ſuch is the Nature of this Warfare, that you will be more the Conquerors ſhould you fall and die in the Field. But this being a Service ſo very formidable to humane Nature, it behoves me ſurely therefore to lay before you ſome very urgent and powerful Reaſons to engage you in it; And this was my fourth Propoſal. And I will move you to this from the following Conſiderations.

1ſt, *Becauſe this is a good Fight, well worthy our Engagement in it, and the fitteſt in the World to exerciſe our Courage and our Skill: Fight the good Fight of Faith.* It is a good Fight upon a double account; firſt, becauſe it tends to make *our ſelves Good*; And next, becauſe it tends to make the *World Good*. And truly the Fight muſt begin firſt at home, and with our ſelves, or we ſhall have little Succeſs abroad. But this I need not urge to you, who are ſufficiently ſenſible, how watchful an Eye the World has upon you, that you be your ſelves reformed, who ſo nobly endeavour the Reformation of others. And it muſt be attributed to the peculiar Providence of

God

God over your Undertaking, that Malice it ſelf has not in ſo long a time been able to find a flaw either in your ſelves or Conduct, with reſpect to that great Work, ſuch as may deſerve its Animadverſion. To paſs on therefore.

Next. As it is a *good Fight*, well worthy our Engaging in, in that it tends to make us in *our ſelves ſo good*; ſo much more as it will do a great deal of *Good in the World*. The World, as it is, is bad, very bad, God he knows; And were He not infinite in his Patience, Forbearance, Long-Suffering, and Goodneſs, as he is in his Holineſs and Juſtice, we had e'er this been in reſpect of Punihment, as well as of Sin, as *Sodom, and made like unto Gomorrha*. And undoubtedly we ſhould e'er this have come up to the heighth both of their Sin, and Fate; but that ſo many excellent Perſons (of which our Brother here before us was truly a great one) with the Zeal of *Phineas*, have brought ſo many of the Criminals to exemplary Puniſhment, to the Terror of Evil-doers; and ſo the *Plague has ſtayed*. And if this *Fight of Faith* then, does not good to the World, I know not what does. And it has been a Thouſand times an Amaſement to me, that any ſerious Chriſtian ſhould arraign it; That the *Sons of Belial*, the avowed Servants of the Devil, ſhould gnaſh their Teeth againſt it, and take ſo much Pains to miſrepreſent and bely it, I do not in the leaſt wonder; for why? The *Devil is the Father of Lies, and the Works of their Father they will do*: It is natural to them. But that any ſincere Chriſtian, and that any eſpecially, who are *chief Members* in the Houſhold of Faith, ſhould expreſs any evil Will to this noble *Fight of Faith*, and thoſe who are ſo glorioufly engaged in it; to ſpeak my Mind freely, It perfectly *confounds* me whenever I think of it; For my Life I cannot account for it.

But yet, tho' many will not with that diabolical Enmity and Fury as ſome very viſibly do, *outrage* this bleſſed and good Work, and thoſe who are ſo ſignally engaged in it; yet too many of thoſe who take themſelves for very good Chriſtians, think they may excuſe themſelves from this the rougheſt part of this *Fight of Faith*, as not being *called* to it; but to rouſe up theſe Perſons out of ſo dangerous a Sloth and Indifference in the *long* and *extended* War between God and Satan; That I may keep cloſe to the Method I have propoſed, having,

2dly, Shewed that the *Crowns of Glory* belong only to thoſe who ſhall endure Hardſhips and Sufferings in this ſpiritual Warfare; And withal, of what a luſtrous Nature thoſe *Crowns* will be, far beyond the fading *Garlands* which are obtained by Earthly Conqueſts; I will proceed to ſhew, that there is no baptized Chriſtian (and I am not *Latitudinarian* enough, to reckon thoſe who deſpiſe and affront the Ordinance of Baptiſm, in the Number of Chriſtians) but is *called*, even to this Degree of Warfare.

But firſt of all let me tell you, that thoſe who are piouſly ambitious of *Crowns of Glory*, muſt endure many Hardſhips, and

and grievous Sufferings in this ſpiritual Warfare. The Apoſtle indeed in the Account which he gave of the Goſpel, ſaying, that *we muſt, through much Tribulation, enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Acts 14. 22. ſeems to intimate, that Chriſtianity brings many Tribulations *neceſſarily* along with it; and ſo our learned *Hammond* underſtands thoſe Words. And truly tho' to *Hades* a Man may go with a whole Skin, yet I much doubt, whether in the ſtreight and narrow way to Heaven, that more unfrequented and untrodden Path, he ſhall not *inevitably* meet with *briars* and *Thorns*, and receive ſome Scratches and Scars, at leaſt; but admit in the more *halcion* and peaceable Days of the Church, it may be otherwiſe; ſo that an Admittance into the lower Stations of Bliſs (as there are many Manſions in our Father's Houſe) may be obtained by thoſe who have ſuffered nothing, either in Life, Goods, or Reputation; yet the *Crowns of Glory* will, I fear, fall to none of their Share. But that diſtinguiſhed *Reward*, ſeems all along reſerved for thoſe who are conſtant, through much Tribulation, to make their way to Heaven. Such a one was St. *Paul*, *he had fought a Good Fight, he had finiſhed his Courſe, he had kept the Faith; and thenceforth* he became aſſured, *there was laid up for him a Crown of Righteouſneſs*, 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. And ſuch is he to whom that Degree of Bleſſedneſs is declared, *James* 1. 12. *Bleſſed is the Man that endureth Temptation*, that is, Affliction; *for when he is tried, he ſhall receive a Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.* And ſuch was the Church of *Smyrna*, Rev. 2. 9, 10. *I know thy Works and Tribulation, ſaies the Firſt and the Laſt, Fear not thoſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer. Behold, the Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into Priſon, that ye may be tried, and ye ſhall have Tribulation ten Days; be thou faithful nnto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.*

But how ſhall I deſcribe how full of Luſtre thoſe *Crowns* will be? How far beyond the *fading Glories* obtain'd by earthly Conqueſts? How fading, how uncertain theſe Latter are, may be eaſily made appear. It is what we ſee every Day. One unfortunate Action ſhall efface the Memory of many triumphant Campaigns: Nay the mere Envy of thoſe worthleſs Creatures who lie ſoking at Home, in Eaſe and Luxury, ſhall tear off the Laurels, tho' freſh and verdant, from the Brows of the moſt glorious Heroes returning from the Toils of War. But the Crown of Confeſſors and Martyrs in the Cauſe of God, is not of ſo tranſitory a Nature. The former *Fight to obtain a corruptible Crown, but theſe an incorruptible*, 1 Cor. 9. 25. No, *theſe ſhall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.* And if you want to be further ſatisfied in the bliſsful State of thoſe who have come out of Tribulation, you have it nobly deſcribed, *Rev.* 7. 15, 16, 17. *Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and ſerve him Day and Night in his Temple; And he that ſitteth on the Throne ſhall dwell among them. They ſhall hunger no more, neither thirſt any more, neither ſhall the Sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midſt of the Throne ſhall feed them; and ſhall lead them unto living Fountains of Waters; and God ſhall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes.* Such

Such are the glorious Rewards of all who ſhall ſignalize themſelves in the Service of God againſt the Dominion of Satan. And hence it is, that our Saviour pronounces ſuch bleſſed, *Matth.* 5. 10. *Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for Righteouſneſs Sake.* Nay, and hence it is, that they are bid to *rejoice*; nay, and to *leap for Joy* in the parallel Place, *Luke* 6. 23. Accordingly hence it is that the Apoſtles, *when they were beaten* before the Sanhedrim for giving their Teſtimony for Chriſt, *departed from the Preſence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his ſake,* Acts 6. 41. And laſtly, hence it is that Chriſtians, in the primitive Times, even crouded the heathen Tribunals to receive the Crown of Martyrdom, of which we have Inſtances innumerable in Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory.

But notwithſtanding theſe ſo glorious Promiſes, and noble Examples; Many, very many; ſo they can but eſcape Hell, and barely enter the Kingdom of Heaven, will be contented to be Door-keepers there, tho' here they are eager enough of uppermoſt places. But this they would rather than paſs through Briars and Thorns in the way, being of too tender and delicate a Conſtitution forſooth, to bear rough and hard Uſage: And they hope they may at leaſt enter the Kingdom of Heaven; becauſe, as they ſuppoſe, all Chriſtians are not called to Sufferings. But,

III. I ſhall now ſhew them the contrary; and that they, even they, be they who they will, are thereunto called. And that I may be ſure to comprehend all; I ſay, that there is no Mortal Man or Woman upon Earth, from the Prince upon the Throne to the Beggar upon the Dunghil, but is thereunto called. My Meaning is, there is no one Chriſtian, but who in the Station he is in, ſome way or other, is bound to diſcountenance, diſcourage, and when milder Methods will not do, to bring to condign Punihment, the Workers and Works of Darkneſs, *Blaſphemy, profane Swearing and Curſing, Lewdneſs, Profanation of the Lord's-Day, exceſſive Drinking*, and all diſſolute, immoral and diſorderly Practices, whereby God is ſo highly diſhonoured, and the Devil ſo directly ſerv'd; and this notwithſtanding the ill Uſage they meet with in the way of their Duty; And this I would prove with reſpect to *Princes, Miniſters, Magiſtrates*, and the *People*; but that on a late Occaſion, to which this is but a ſorrowful Appendage, I have already done it: And to that I muſt again refer you. And ſhall therefore, inſtead of particular Arguments to each Rank and Degree of Men, proceed to my

IV. Motive, which I am ſure concludes all baptized Perſons under the Obligation; and that is, that all ſuch have ſo publickly and ſolemnly engaged to fight under Chriſt's Banner; and it will be our utmoſt Diſgrace, and the *higheſt Degree of Cowardice* (pardon the Expreſſion, for I think there can be nothing high and truly great in Cowardice) to fly from our baptiſmal Covenant our ſelves, & give way in the Day of Battel; eſpecially having made ſo publick and ſolemn Engagements to the contrary. *We have profeſſed a good Profeſſion before many Witneſſes.* And what are thoſe ſolemn and publick Engagements made in Baptiſm? Why there we have in the Preſence of God and his Church, *renounced the Devil, and all his Works, the World alſo, and the Fleſh*; we have profeſs'd to *believe* (a thing quite different from the Infidelity and Profaneneſs of the which now reigns)

all

all the Articles of our Christian Faith; And we have engaged to *obey*; what? *All Gods holy Will and Commandments, and to walk in the same*, without Tergiversation, upon any difficulties and dangers, *to our Lives End*. And I am sure, among the principal of God's Commands those must take place, which put us upon promoting the Destruction of Satan, and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom. Thus all *have made a good Profession before many Witnesses*; yea before many and great Witnesses, even God, Angels and Men. And this may be thought such a Covenant or *military Oath*, as I have explained it, as may be deem'd enough to oblige us to the *good Fight of Faith*, in what Field soever, be it a Field of Blood, into which Providence shall call upon us to fight it.

But further yet, the more strictly to engage us; Our Holy Mother this Church, from the Honour and Regard, it peculiarly bears to our Saviour, (as appears by its concluding every Collect, every Prayer, I had almost said every Petition it makes, in his Name) *Signs* every baptized and covenanted Member of it, with the *Sign of the Cross*; That being the Banner under which we are to fight: *In token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his Banner against Sin, the World, and the Devil, and to continue Christ's faithful Soldiers and Servants unto our Lives End*. And surely this Engagement of our baptismal Covenant and Oath so solemnized, is so strong, that Nothing can be more forcible.

Thus you see all baptized Christians with us especially, are doubly concluded under an Obligation *to fight the good Fight of Faith*. But all you will say are not in the peaceable Times of the Church *thereunto called*. In Times and Places of Persecution, as under Pagan or heretical Powers, the true Servants of God are often called forth to suffer, they will own; but where orthodox Christianity is the national Religion, and *by Law establish'd*, as God be prais'd it is with us, there is no Room to suffer. No, what not for *Righteousness Sake?* Martyrdom, as I before told you, is a Testimony given to the Authority of God, as well with Respect to the Preceptive as the doctrinal Part of Religion. And that in an *establish'd Church* Men may be pointed out for Death, for asserting and standing up for his Laws, we have too sad an Instance before us. And as to an inferior Degree of suffering; if any one shall attempt to do any uncommon or considerable Good to the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom in the World; I am very much mistaken if he shall not soon bring the World about his Ears; as much Christian as it is supposed to be. *A Gallio that cares for none of these Things*, may pass through the World peaceably enough, but whether with what Face he shall reach Heaven, I very much doubt. For I think as he is listed in a War, where the utmost Vigour is required, he is *called* to something more, than what he thinks to be innocent, but is in Reality to be good for nought. In short, this is a War whereunto we are *Call'd*; and this is an Argument so pressing to rouse us from Sloth or Indifferency in it; that I need not add more. However,

V. and *Lastly*, Because the Example of stout Leaders is of such mighty Consequence to encourage those that follow them to do their Parts also bravely, I will represent to you with what Courage, and undaunted Magnanimity, the *Martyrs* heretofore have fought in the hottest Parts of the Battle in this Christian Warfare; and particularly by

by our good Brother here before us. And here I might lay before you a glorious Scene of triumphant Atchievements and Sufferings in the pulling down the Kingdom of Satan, by the Apostles, Confessors, Martyrs, in the several Ages of the Church, down throughout the Times of *Pagan* and *Papal* Persecution and Tyranny. But this would be to transcribe a *Martyrology*, and I must refer you to the History it self of the Martyrs. But as to the Manner of their heroick Bravery and Sufferings, I cannot better give it you, than in the very Words of the Apostle, *Heb.* 11. 12. The Chapters I before so earnestly recommended to your most serious Consideration, to fortify you in all your Undertakings, and to support you under whatever Sufferings in so glorious a Cause and Conflict. The Words are these, beginning at the 33. *v. By Faith they subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, obtained Promises, stopped the Mouths of Lions, quenched the Violence of Fire, escaped the Edge of the Sword, out of Weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in Fight, turned to flight the Armies of the Aliens. Women received their dead raised to Life again; and others were tortur'd, not accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection. And others had tryal of cruel Mockings and Scourgings, yea moreover, of Bonds, and Imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the Sword: They wandred about in sheep-skins, and in Goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. (Of whom the World was not worthy) they wandred in Deserts, and in Mountains, and in Dens and Caves* of the Earth. And *these all have obtained a good Report through Faith.*

And now what have I more to do, but to give you some Account also of your dear Brother, whose Obsequies we do here solemnize, that you may see how nearly he trod in the Steps, and has been honoured with the Fate of the preceeding Confessors and Martyrs. And that for your Example and Encouragement in this glorious Fight. And the Account I can give of him with good Assurance is this.

That he has been above Thirty Years a strict Professor of Religion, and led his Life accordingly.

That he had a great Zeal for God's Honour, and the Salvation of Souls, and a great Hatred against Sin, which made him almost from the first engage himself in the Work of *Reformation of Manners.*

That in the 17 or 18 *Years*, that he has been concern'd in it, none in all that Time could ever fix upon him, any Thing that was either wicked dishoneſt or; even his worst of Enemies, the Whores, and Rogues, could not but give him a good Word; may have been heard to say, that they Believed him to act therein, merely from Conscience.

That he had been aiding and assisting to the apprehending and prosecuting of several Thousands of lewd and profligate Persons, besides a vast Number of Sabbath Breakers, prophane Swearers, and Drunkards.

That he was of a sweet, gentle and courteous Temper, and of a very modest, and humble Behaviour; very good natur'd, and always ready to serve and assist every one, even his very Enemies; and he had a singular Plainness and Sincerity shining thro' all his Actions; He was very courageous, and fear'd no Encounter, yet had great Calmness and Presence of Mind in Danger.

That he has often been much abused, beaten, mobb'd, and wounded; and in very great Danger of his Life in detecting, and bringing to Justice, the lewd and disorderly Persons. And was the first, that took in-

to his Arms from among the Rioters, Mr. *JOHN COOPER*, a *Conſtable*, about Seven Years ſince murder'd in the Execution of his Office, in ſuppreſſing the publick Lewdneſs, and Diſorders at *MAY FAIR*, tho' there were then above Forty Soldiers, with their Swords drawn.

That tho' he was almoſt continually in Danger, and Broils, and by his great Pains and conſtant Labour and Service in the Work, he had very much broke and impair'd his Health, and Strength, yet he was unwearied in it to the very laſt.

And in his laſt Work you ſee, he has fallen a Victim by the Sword of God's Enemies, being murdered by *Three private Soldiers*; a ſort of Men, I am ſorry to ſpeak it (of whom if we may judge by their horrid Oaths and Curſes, and by their wicked Lives and Manners, which with too much Tolerauce ſurely from their Commanders, they are permitted to lead) who, tho' they *receive the Chriſtians Pay*, are Night and Day *fighting the Devils Battles*. Thus this brave *Soldier of Jeſus Chriſt* has fallen. And this ſhort and true Account I have given of him for your Example and Encouragement who ſurvive him, that you alſo may proceed *conquering, and to conquer* in the ſame glorious Fight.

It may ſeem indeed at firſt Sight to be rather a Diſcouragement to you. But you may remember what you have often heard, that the *Blood of the Martyrs was the Seed of the Church*. And the Church of God has indeed ever flouriſhed the better for being watred by the Blood of the Martyrs. And I believe alſo it will do the like amongſt us, for the innocentt and precious Blood which has been lately ſhed in this Cauſe of *Reformation of Manners*. It is but a few Years ſince that honeſt Man Mr. *Cooper* fell a Martyr in the Cauſe, by the hands of an Atheiſt, aſſiſted alſo by *ſoldiers*, for fetching before Juſtice ſome of Satans Vaſſals out of that horrible Den of Impiety, *May-Fair*; and you have heard how that innocent Man's Blood has cried, and does ſtill cry for Vengeance, ſo as to cauſe the worthy *Magiſtrates* and *Juries*, both of City and County, to petition to have that execrable Place of Debauchery and Impiety totally put down; and I hope the Cry both of it, and them, and of many other good Men throughout the Nation, joining with them, will be ſoon heard.

And now the Blood which has been ſhed on the like Occaſion, & in the very ſame Manner; how know you but that it alſo may cry ſo loudly, as to ſhake the very Foundations of the *Play-Houſe*; a Seminary of Atheiſm, Impiety and Immorality, not at all inferior to the other. And would not its Fall rejoice your Hearts? Courage, Courage, brave Soldiers of God, and of your Lord Jeſus Chriſt. There is no hurt yet. Our martyred Brother has loſt nothing, I am ſure, for he has received his Crown of Glory. And your bleſſed Cauſe, I am perſwaded, will ſuffer nothing by it; it will be more firmly eſtabliſhed, it will be better cemented by his Blood.

Upon the whole then; perſevere in the Name of God, *to fight the good Fight of Faith, to lay hold on eternal Life, whereunto you are not only called, but have witneſſed a good Confeſſion before many Witneſſes.*

Nay, and from the very Example of the Martyr before you, let me exhort you, *my beloved Brethren, that ye be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, foraſmuch as you know, that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord*; Amen, Amen. *FINIS.*

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